

March 16, 2001

Climate

Historical Precipitation Patterns

Precipitation in the Lake Whatcom watershed is typical of the maritime Pacific Northwest, with a pronounced wet period from October through April, and a pronounced dry period from May through September. Monthly precipitation data are shown in Figures 1.2.1-2 through 1.2.1-5 for four of the six electronically-gauged sites in the watershed. Because of the relatively steep topography of much of the watershed, precipitation patterns are highly variable, with expected increases in precipitation at higher elevations, and toward the south end of the lake. The total amount of annual precipitation is also highly variable, as shown in Figure 1.2.1-6. Since 1990, annual precipitation totals for the south end of the watershed varied from lows near 40 inches to more than 80 inches. Similarly, the drier north end of the watershed varied from lows near 30 inches to highs of more than 60 inches.

